

QEP Proposal **Creative, Innovative, Problem-Focused Learning**

Contact Information for Primary Author:

Dr. Tammy S. Schultz, tammy.schultz@usmc.mil

Executive Summary

This proposal focuses on creative, innovative, problem-focused learning. A survey of the literature and various interviews, including with Paul Van Riper, indicates that while creative thinking cannot be taught, the conditions to empower those with these gifts can be forged. Creativity includes three traits: novelty, value, and unexpectedness.¹ Critical thinking, on the other hand, usually encompasses Bloom's taxonomy's top three levels: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.² Knowing if something is creative requires subject matter expertise that either the student and/or the professor bring to the problem set. In many ways, critical thinking is easier to identify than creative thinking, yet both still require competent professional assessment. Additionally, both types of thinking prove ever more necessary as the United States seeks new and sophisticated answers to wicked national security problems. This multifaceted proposal seeks to enhance the ability of students to gain deep expertise, take risks, and produce intellectually at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, whether at the tactical, operational, or strategic strata. Although all of the suggested recommendations have value and should be appraised holistically as being mutually reinforcing, the leadership may also choose to adopt some, but not all, of the following proposals:

Change Assessments from Letter Grades to High Pass/Pass/Fail to improve faculty feedback, focus feedback on student learning, mitigate grade inflation, and encourage intellectual risk-taking.

Adopt Oxford-Style Tutorials to deepen students' understanding and expertise on specific topics and expand the reach of resident faculty to CDET and EPME.

Engage Applied Problem-Solving to improve collaborative learning and integration of knowledge across the university through focused research, symposia, and publication on timely issues relevant to the Marine Corps

Include Concentrated Self-Study between semesters to allow students to synthesize their learning while promoting academic depth and creativity.

¹ Harnad, Stevan. "Creativity: Method or Magic?" *Princeton University Journal*. Available at:

harnad@ecs.soton.ac.uk <http://cogsci.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/> <ftp://cogsci.ecs.soton.ac.uk/pub/harnad/> <gopher://gopher.princeton.edu/11/libraries/pujournals>

² Ennis, Robert H. "Critical Thinking Assessment." *Theory Into Practice*. Special Issue: Teaching for Higher Order Thinking. Vol. 32, Issue 3, 1993: 179-186.